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## My Note Book.

Leonato.—Are these things spoken or do I but dream?  
Don John.—Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.  
—Much Ado About Nothing.



HE Angelus remains the highest priced of modern pictures. Meissonnier's "1814" has been sold in Paris for 500,000 francs—not 850,000 frs., as has been published in every newspaper in this country. The facts in the case are as follows: At the sale of the collection of Mr. Porto-Riche, on May 14th, a replica of the picture having brought 131,000 frs., the owner of the original, Mr. Delahante, thought it well to send a note to the Paris papers, pointing out that the Porto-Riche picture was but a copy of his, and much inferior to it. The original picture is dated 1864, and was in the Salon of that year, where it was bought by Mr. Delahante. It remained in his collection until the publication of his letter; although, according to the Parisian journals, "Mr. Vanderbilt"—which "Mr. Vanderbilt"?—had offered 450,000 frs. for it; the Gaulois says 300,000 frs. However this may be, Mr. Delahante accepted an offer of 500,000 frs. brought him by a dealer a few days after his note appeared in the papers, the principal in the transaction being Mr. Chauchard, who has made his fortune as founder and director of the *Magazin du Louvre*—the "Macy's" of Paris. The dealer got merely ten per cent commission. Mr. Delahante originally paid Meissonnier only 70,000 frs. for the painting; but on the conclusion of the sale to Mr. Chauchard, he generously sent the artist his check for 50,000 frs., which, it seems to me, is the most gratifying part of the whole business.

THE *Moniteur des Arts* gives the following description of the picture: "In a hollow, deeply rutted road, filled with half-melted snow, Napoleon advances at the walking pace of his white horse, closely followed by his staff. His officers look gloomy and dejected; they do not dare to break the silence. The Emperor, his right hand thrust into the breast of his gray overcoat, abandons himself to bitter reflections. He is pale, his eye is without fire, and his mouth is distorted by fever. Behind him, in the second place, comes Ney, with his hand upon his hip, dressed in a dark green uniform, a gray overcoat buttoned about his throat, and thrown back with empty sleeves from the shoulder. The collar is raised, and he wears a general's sash about the waist. He rides a dark bay horse, and seems to be the only one who retains confidence. Near him Berthier, on another bay, is wrapped in a large mantle, and seems to be resigned to whatever may happen. Very little behind these two is General Drouot, riding a spotted gray; he is half asleep, and has his right hand in the pocket of his black coat. Generals Gourgaut, de Flahaut and the rest of the staff follow, with officers of the guides, chasseurs and hussars; then the escort of guides, and, in the distance, the cuirassiers of the guard. In the extreme distance, at the right of the picture, a drum corps, with drums hanging silently by their sides, precede the main body of infantry. The landscape is dark and foggy."

THE London critics have little but praise for the contributions of some of the American artist contingent to the Royal Academy, "The Grosvenor" and New Gallery exhibitions this year. F. D. Millet, whose method of painting more resembles that of Alma-Tadema—by whom all Britons swear—than does that of any of his countrymen, The Athenæum says "has more than secured his position by 'How the Gossip Grew,' another piece of humor like his 'Anthony Van Corlear' in last year's Academy:

"It is a delicate and brightly painted interior of a once handsome chamber, retaining traces of the quasi-Greek taste of the brothers Adam in the choice profiles of its decorations and sea-green walls picked out with gold. These forms and colors suit the clear open morning light pervading the room, where two young ladies are placed at a daintily set forth breakfast-table. One of them reads aloud from a letter which has just arrived, and the other, listening, stops in the act of drinking tea. The expressions are very engaging, spontaneous, and spirited, and there is no caricature about them—a reticence rare in modern

English genre, and reminding us of the better class of French genre. In such examples we expect to find the table equipage of silver as delicate, crisp, firmly painted, and fine in color and modelling as this bright and delicately toned picture shows; the white tablecloth suits the ladies' pale blue and light amber dresses, as well as the green wall. The whole work has been carried out with good taste and complete research."

"A May Day Morning," by Mr. Abbey, "the renowned book illustrator of New York," described by the same writer as "an effective study of the 'qualities' on a large and difficult scale—his first achievement in oils"—is pronounced "one of the remarkable examples of the year; an original and charming exercise in tone, tint and line, each in a low key, and all as beautifully harmonized as we could wish them." Of Ernest Parton's landscapes The Athenæum is no less eulogistic.

It must be said, though, that while the London critics are full of praise for such Americans as follow the English conventions, they are merciless toward those who fail to bestow on their painting that "finish" which they hold must be inseparable from the best work. Especially unappreciative are they of those of our men who betray French influence. George Hitchcock's "Tulip Culture" is only found worthy of indirect mention as a study "of the 'qualities' of tone and color." At "The Grosvenor" the "strangeness and ugliness" of Mr. Muhrman's "Harvesters, Evening," are the only qualities the critic can find in it, and it is summarily dismissed as "a frightful libel on nature." At The New Gallery "the large landscape with figures, which Mr. J. J. (sic) Sargent calls 'Ighame Mote,'" The Athenæum says compels it "to wonder why an artist of reputation should trifle with the world and produce a huge exercise in raw greens and dull purples, a lightless atmosphere laden with paint, and a company of ill-drawn, formless figures."

ONCE more, it seems, Benjamin Constant misses the Medal of Honor at the Paris Salon. But this year it has gone to one whose success can provoke no envy. For the first time it has been voted to a landscape painter. The successful competitor is Louis François, who is now in his seventy-sixth year. Although his work at the present Salon is not as important as that of Harpignies, the medal was conferred upon him in appreciation of his glorious artistic career. Two Americans were honored: Jules L. Stewart by a third-class medal, and Frederic P. Vinton by an honorable mention. No Medal of Honor was voted in the section of sculpture, notwithstanding the remarkable excellence of the display. The American sculptors, Edmond Stewardson, Douglas Tilden, Miss Alice Ruggles, Guernsey Mitchell and Cyrus E. Dallin received honorable mentions.

THE fame of the high-priced Angelus has reached not only to Omaha and Ponkapog, but has penetrated the French provincial towns and has tempted an enterprising showman, Vandermaesen by name, to his ruin. This gentleman conceived the idea of exhibiting copies of the famous picture in the provinces, and with true business energy ordered half a dozen, to begin with, of a painter who had the honesty to sign his name, with the words "d'après Millet," to the first copy he produced. This did not suit the showman, who thought that for his purposes it would be better to have no signature at all. He therefore got the painter to erase it; but afterward, pretending to have changed his mind, he borrowed a brush and some color and went over the trace of the word "Millet," taking care not to renew the rest of the signature. His cleverness will cost him two months in prison, to which he has been condemned in Rouen as a counterfeiter.

THE French Government seems to have engaged in the hunt for false pictures with commendable energy. Certain false Bastien-Lepages, a "Peasant Smoking" and a "Peasant Girl Resting on a Fagot," are among the latest. They were introduced by their owner, a lady, to certain dealers to whom she wished to sell. Being doubtful of their authenticity, the dealers consulted M. Emile Bastien-Lepage, the painter's brother. He accompanied them to the house in the rue de Presbourg where the pictures were, and unhesitatingly pronounced them both forgeries. The police have now taken the matter in hand, and have unearthed a "collector" who is possessed of several of these forged pictures—the trial will show whether innocently or not.

THE late M. Spitzer did not appreciate very highly the works of the eighteenth century. Like Mr. Ruskin, he placed the flowering time of European art in the Middle Ages, and was accustomed to speak of the fine Renaissance objects in his collection as already showing signs of the decadence. His house, at the corner of the rue Villejust and the avenue Victor Hugo, is filled with a wonderful collection of ivories, enamels, reliquaries, statuettes, faïences, bronzes, arms and armor. It has a main building and two projecting wings surrounding a court at the end of a formal garden, which opens on the avenue. The left wing is a sort of entrance hall. The ground floor of the main building, divided into many rooms, contains the bulk of the collection, which includes bas-reliefs of Della Robbia and Donatello, extremely rare Oiron faïences, and a great mass of objects of Gothic and early Renaissance workmanship. His special collection, however, that of arms and armor, occupies the second wing to the right, which is but one great gallery lit by windows of antique stained glass, and completely filled with poniards, swords and battle-axes, helmets, corselets and suits of mail, damascened, engraved, chiselled and inlaid in a thousand fashions.

MR. SPITZER is said to have gone to Paris early in life with about \$2000 in his pocket, and no very definite idea as to what to do with it. He bought an original drawing by Albert Dürer, which led him to become a collector. He bought a few pieces of bric-à-brac from time to time, sold some at a large profit, and with the money thus obtained made fresh purchases. He had good taste and some knowledge to start with, and in time became an expert. In this way he drifted into business; but he is supposed to have made most of his money by speculation in real estate. The financiers for whom he bought pictures and other works of art are credited with having given him some "straight tips" as to still larger affairs. At any rate, he has died worth about \$3,000,000, a large part of which is in his house and collection. He was a stout little man, round-faced and sharp-eyed, wearing a red wig, talking little, and sincerely devoted to the arts of the Middle Ages. I trust that the publication of the wonderfully fine illustrated catalogue of his collection—noticed in The Art Amateur recently, on the occasion of Mr. J. W. Bouton's announcement concerning it—will not be discontinued in consequence of his death.

MONTEZUMA.

### THE PARIS SALON OF 1890.

IT must be admitted that the Salon had lost some of its attractiveness for amateurs during the past few years, owing to the increasing flood of indifferent pictures that was accepted by the jury. This year, the quarrel in the French Artists' Society and the change in the system of electing the Examining Committee had given a renewal of interest to this spring exhibition. Everybody who occupies himself about art was anxious to see what effect the recent division among the artists would have upon the size and quality of the display. Consequently, on varnishing day, which, in reality, is the real opening day of the Salon, there was an unusually large throng of persons, who were present not merely to gossip about the new spring toilettes that the ladies had brought out for the first time, but to see for themselves if the doleful predictions made by certain morose minds would be realized.

In point of number the Salon this year is scarcely a whit behind its immediate predecessors. A great many people had ventured to hope that the new jury would be less indulgent than some of the others had been, and not admit, for the mere sake of filling up so much wall space, a lot of paintings that might just as well be left outside. But by force of habit the Salon jury has reached the conclusion that about so many paintings are absolutely demanded by the public. Thus, this year there are 2480 pictures, or 300 less than last year. The sculpture, engravings and drawings are in about the same proportion as before. This slight difference in the number of paintings is scarcely noticeable in going through the various rooms, and the eye soon becomes wearied in trying to discover among this mass anything out of the common run. Scarcely any remarkable works are to be found. There is the same general level of excellence that we have seen for the past half dozen years. Still, let me hasten to add that this level of excellence is a high one, and that as long as the present system of admitting so many paintings prevails we shall probably not have a more satisfactory display. Of course it would be idle to say that here

and there we do not discover on the line some pictures that would have been moved up higher if men like Puvis de Chavannes, Cazin and Dagnan-Bouveret had not taken their flight; still, on the other hand, the works of artists whose names we have been accustomed to see year after year are in their usual places and give to the Salon the same general character as of old. The men of established reputation show us nothing new, either in subject or treatment, and the younger artists are still groping about in uncertainty. Occasionally we discover an effort to break away from the old traditions, but in the majority of cases the mark of the Bouguereau, Lefebvre or Julian studio is plainly visible, while the influence of Puvis de Chavannes, Cazin, Besnard and other seceders is frequently manifest.

The landscape painters continue to make a strong showing both in numbers and excellence. Français, Harpignies, Guillemet, Yon and a host of others, are represented by works full of sincerity, although some of the younger artists have an inclination to exaggerate the picturesque character of their studies by giving a sentimental embellishment to nature. The nude has always a multitude of devotees among the French artists, and in this difficult kind they certainly hold their own against all other schools. Unfortunately the triviality and vulgarity of the subjects are often out of keeping with the skill displayed in rendering them. At the present Salon, Bouguereau, Jules Lefebvre, Benjamin Constant, Doucet, Maignan, Franc Lamy, Ménard, Lesquene, Fourrié, Commere, Moreau de Tours and many others have works that show profound knowledge of figure and tone. There are no great portraits in the Salon, but, as usual, many excellent ones. Bonnat's President Carnot, as severely correct as the original, is one of the few portraits of celebrities, and the best; but Jules Lefebvre, Henner, Fantin-Latour, Aimé Morot, Paul Dubois, Rochon and others contribute fine portraits of private persons. It seems to me that there is a tendency among the portrait painters to pay too much attention to accessories, to value elegance and dashing execution rather than solidity. The display of military painting is a choice one. Besides Detaille's work, of which I shall say a word farther on, Sergeant, Flameng, Boutigny, Cormon and Grolleron have sent some very interesting compositions. Great historical subjects are rare. Jean Paul Laurens, Scherrer, Motte and Arman Jean are the principal artists who remain faithful to this somewhat neglected branch. Anecdotal history has an attraction for several painters; the best contributions are by Rochegrosse, Fred. Humbert and Hoffbauer. Religious paintings no longer seem to be in favor, and by religious paintings I mean the old dramatic and profoundly human subjects that require faith and live by emotion, and which were formerly renewed at nearly every generation by a new interpretation. There are, however, many representations of church interiors, women at prayer, and such everyday scenes, that have no special religious feeling or conviction. The great feature of this Salon, as, in fact, it has been of the exhibitions of several years past, is the delineation of contemporary life—genre painting, as it is called. But, if we sometimes find a sincere and personal effort to render the living reality, it is not so agreeable to notice that a majority of the artists choose by preference scenes of rags and misery, surgical operations and "human documents" of a like nature. Mystical subjects abound, and denote a curious state of mind among many of the younger men.

To see the increasing number of foreign exhibitors every year recalls the mot of Rochefort, who said a few years ago that, whereas the French artists formerly sold their pictures to foreigners, the time was fast approaching when they would be obliged to buy of them. The American artists at the present Salon are numerous, only a few men, such as Sargent, Harrison and Dannat having thrown their lot in with Meissonier. Walter Gay has a very strong picture, a young girl seated at a window full of geraniums, which gives him an opportunity to make an interesting study in white. Other good paintings by Americans are: "A Widow," Charles Sprague Pearce; "La Femme de Bouddha," Albert Herter; "La Nuit dans les Champs," J. L. Shonborn; "Spring Flowers," J. L. Stewart; "Letter to the Grandson," Elizabeth Gardner; cattle piece, W. N. Howe; "Deux Jeunes Commères," W. S. Kendall; "A la Campagne," Charles de Klyn; "Repose," E. N. Blashfield, and portraits by A. A. Anderson, W. E. Poucher, Thomas S. Clarke, Carroll Beckwith, Julian Story and Miss A. E. Klumpke. Paul Peel, a Canadian, has a

very interesting picture called "After the Bath," and a Spaniard named Checa exhibits a "Race of Roman Chariots," which is skilfully grouped and full of movement. Some of the French critics sniff at what they call Franco-American or Franco-English art, but others, more prudent, acknowledge the originality, imagination and technical science displayed by the foreign painters.

The most striking picture of the Salon is Detaille's "En Batterie!" which represents a colonel of artillery leading his men into action. The officer, on horseback, turns his head toward his gunners and, brandishing his sword, urges them forward on the gallop. In this picture Detaille has launched out into a work of greater dimensions, so far as his principal figure is concerned, than ever before, but he has lost none of his qualities of correct design, military spirit and dash. Munkacsy's large decorative panel, representing an "Allegory of the Italian Renaissance," is another important work, and superior in tone—that is to say, clearer and more joyous than the artist's earlier compositions; there is less "liquorice juice" in it, as the "rapins" say. Jules Lefebvre's "Lady Godiva" is an interesting canvas, although much too large for the subject. These are what are called the "clous" of the Salon. It is needless to enumerate the rest. The reader who is at all acquainted with contemporary French art will get a sufficient idea of the whole when I say that besides Gérôme's traditional lion, Vibert's cardinals, Worms's Spanish figures, Jules Breton's poetic peasants, Benjamin Constant's Oriental nudes, Vollon's saucepans, etc., are a multitude of works recalling the manner of these different masters.

I have but little space in which to speak of the sculpture. Happily, the display can be characterized in a few words: it is admirable and worthy of the high renown of the French school. Only a few of the sculptors have deserted the Palais des Champs-Élysées, so that the latest works of such masters as Falguières, Delaplanche, Cain, Frémiet, Chapu and others, are to be seen here by the side of those of their promising pupils. C. W.

PARIS, JUNE 1, 1890.

#### THE "MEISSONIER SALON."

THE exhibition now open at the Palais des Beaux-Arts on the Champ de Mars, and popularly known as the Meissonier Salon, can hardly be called a Salon in the ordinary acceptance of the term—that is to say, a representation of a year's efforts of the French school. It is rather a choice exhibition, in which several works figure that have been seen before, and which have been brought out from studios and private collections to give greater brilliancy to this first attempt of the painters who have withdrawn from the French Artists' Society. There are, however, a lot of new works by the side of old ones, and if all of them are not of equal value there are none that are absolutely bad.

The exhibition consists of about nine hundred paintings, three hundred drawings and engravings, and eighty-three pieces of statuary. All these are admirably arranged with a view to being seen under the best conditions and with the least fatigue. The sculpture is placed in a circular gallery on the first floor, from which lead the rooms where the paintings are exhibited. Two of these rooms are palatial in their dimensions, being each nearly three hundred feet long. The pictures, with very few exceptions, are hung on two rows, and the work of each artist is placed in one group and separated from the succeeding group by a reasonable space. Thus the visitor gets at a glance an idea of the artist's talent under its various forms, for I have omitted to say that some of the exhibitors have sent eight or ten paintings. At the Salon in the Champs-Élysées the pictures are crowded together and piled up on top of each other, so that it is impossible to see about one third of them. This would not be a great misfortune if the "croûtes" alone were skied, but it frequently happens that an interesting work by a new man is hung beyond reach of the eye simply because the painter is wanting in "influence." At the Meissonier Salon nearly everybody has been treated with equal fairness, and both artist and public are gainers thereby.

What at once strikes the visitor is the gay modern note that predominates. The artists have evidently looked upon the bright side of life. There is also observable among the younger men a greater personality and independence than we see at the other Salon. The influence of the studio is less; having to please only themselves they have endeavored to show just as much individuality as possible. The result is a varied and

original display. Naturally, we find nothing new in the works of the men who long ago gave all they were capable of giving, but even in the paintings of the recognized masters there is a freshness that we had not recently noticed at the Palais des Champs-Élysées. Doubtless the excellent grouping here has something to do with this favorable impression.

The picture that attracts the crowd is, of course, Meissonier's Napoleon at Jena. Seated upon his white horse and with his staff officers slightly in the rear, the Emperor is watching the charge of cavalry which rushes forward in the distance. The ground is heavy from recent rain, while thick, gray clouds overhang the battlefield. All the figures in the foreground are executed with that minuteness of detail and that variety of attitude found in all Meissonier's military subjects; but this canvas lacks, perhaps, the passionate feeling which pervades some of his earlier works. Another painting that invites general attention is Jean Béraud's "Monte-Carlo," showing the large hall of the celebrated gambling house filled with a crowd of men and women seated around the green baize table. The types of players and their faces and postures are skilfully rendered. Léon Couturier's "Au Cabestan"—hoisting the anchor on board of a man-of-war—is another of the striking pictures of the exhibition. Henri Gervex sends several portraits and studies, but the work that appeals to the masses is his large group of portraits of the editor and principal writers of the République Française. Lhermitte, besides three charming landscapes, shows a large painting destined for the Faculty of Sciences; it represents Sainte-Claire Deville giving a lesson in practical chemistry and is an excellent collection of portraits. Puvis de Chavannes exhibits a decorative panel, "Inter artes et naturam," executed for the Rouen Museum, and which is one of the most perfect compositions that this master has yet made. Of Henri Lerolle's three decorative paintings, the best is "Evening," which is full of freshness and distinction. Other notable decorative works are the ceilings by Gallaud, for the Hôtel de Ville, the panel by Adolphe Binet, recalling an episode of the Liege, and Besnard's ceiling, also for the Hotel de Ville. This latter work is unfinished, but even in its present state it is a curious combination of yellows, reds, blues and all the other tones that this eccentric artist handles with such extraordinary prodigality.

The landscape paintings are especially numerous and important. Cazin, Émile Barau, Albert Aublet, Damoye, Durst, Alfred Smith, Billotte, Lebourg, to mention only the French artists, are all represented by new and splendid work. The portraits are more plentiful even than the landscapes. Ribot alone sends ten, several of which date back many years; Carolus-Duran never grouped together a better collection than the seven strikingly brilliant portraits that he has sent to this Salon; Desboutin shows nearly a dozen, all of which are curious and some superb; Roll has not been successful with Jane Hading's likeness, but his portraits of Coquelin cadet, Yves Guyot and an old Picardy peasant, are irreproachable. Dagnan-Bouveret has sent only three small canvases—a portrait, an Arab cemetery and a landscape. The genre paintings denote that a large number of artists are constantly seeking to reproduce as faithfully as possible the scenes of every-day life. Jules Muenier, a young artist who came into notice two years ago, confirms the good impression made at his début. The five paintings that he shows this year are all highly meritorious. Prinnet, Friaut, Adolphe Binet, Jeanniot, Rixens, Duez, Perret, Louis Deschamps, are the others whose popular scenes are the most admired. Carrière's dreamy and sentimental portraits, Madeleine Lemaire's nude figure, "Sommeil," Eugene Lambert's cats, John Lewis Brown's military and hunting scenes, Besnard's impressionist fancies, Monténard's sunny Provençal studies deserve to be mentioned among the noteworthy French contributions.

Turning to the foreign collection we find many very remarkable paintings. Perhaps the strongest one is the Dutch artist Israel's "Zandwoort Fisher Girls going to Market." Von Uhde's "La-vas est l'Auberge" is another powerfully human work. Kuehl's church interiors are full of exquisite qualities. Thaulow's snow studies, Edelfelt's Finland landscapes, Skredsvig's Corsican winter scene, Max Libermann's Dutch views, Artz's "Petit Menagère," Alfred Stevens's splendid group of eleven paintings, Nagborg and Mesdag's marine views, Boldini's Parisian sketches, Thoren's cattle-pieces and Ribarz's landscapes, are all remarkably fine and denote strong individuality.